

Jack Goodman's Cityview

Kimball's hotel and stage stop was one of the last in nation

Since we seemingly feel the need to maintain that legal 65-mile-per hour speed limit when rolling along our interstate highways, chances are you've scarcely had time to turn your head for a glance at the cluster of ranch buildings two miles east of the Kimball's Junction exit to Park City and a bit west of Silver Creek Junction. That's especially understandable on a busy holiday weekend when you're threading heavy traffic hoping to stroll Park City's historic Main Street, plan to fish at Wanship, or want to bet a dollar or two on the horses racing at Evanston.

But there was a time in Utah's territorial days when other swift horses raced to and from the still existing sandstone ranch house and its adjacent pair of log-sided barns. A "dig" through the pages of the Historical American Buildings Survey prepared by scholarly Melvin Smith a few years back, reminds one that the big stone structure with its wooden outbuildings packages more history than almost any other such set of structure in all the west. Referred to by most locals as "The Kimball Ranch," the main structures date from 1862. They were built as a much-needed hotel and stage stop by William H. Kimball, eldest son of Heber C. Kimball, recalled in Latter-day Saints histories as a "confidant of Brigham Young."

The stone house and log barns, mellowed by hot summer sun and encased in winter snow and icicles for 138 years, are among the few remaining original stations of the Overland Stage route buildings that



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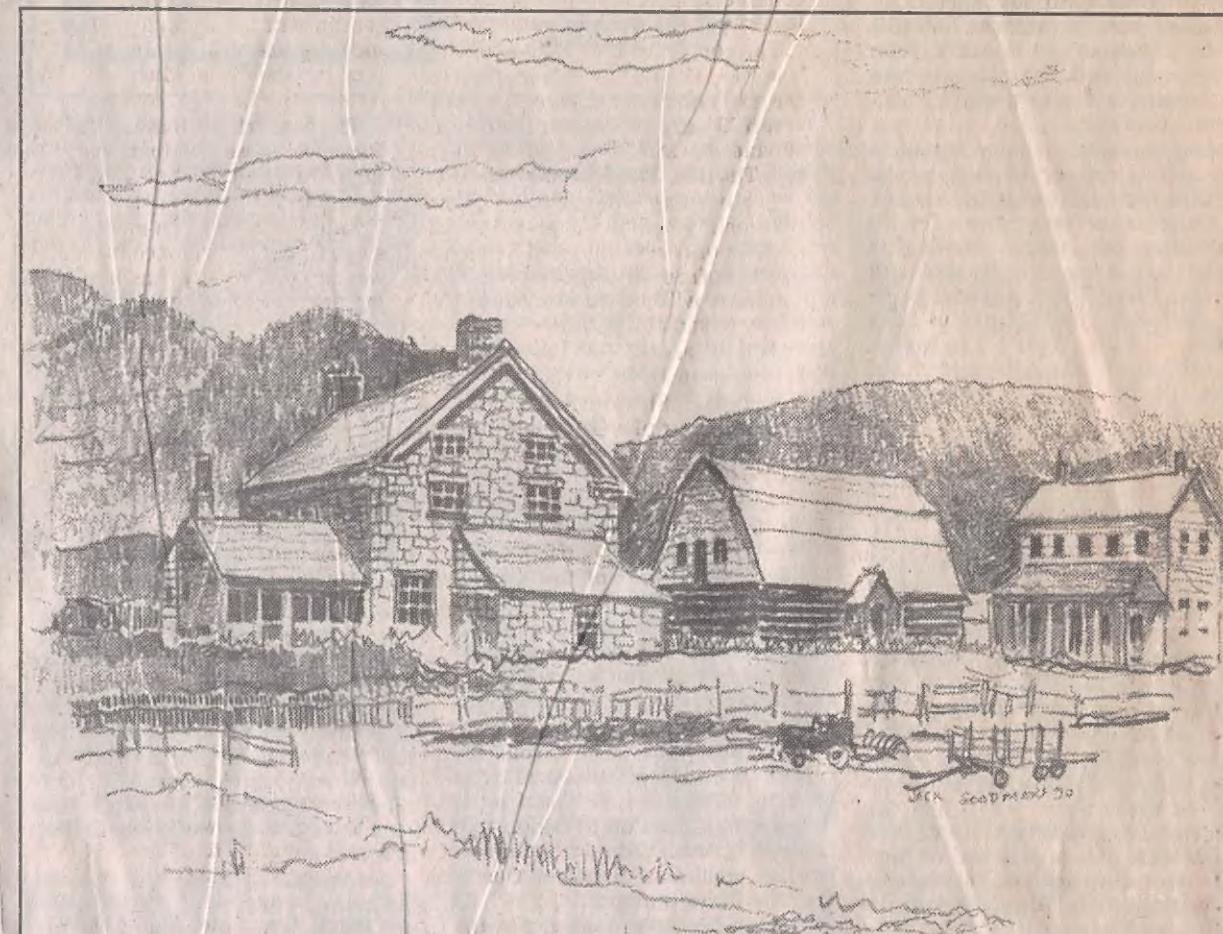
of gravel at a barnyard gate where barking ranch dogs (very properly on guard) have a way of discouraging history-minded strangers from descending from their cars. For the record, the Kimball clan transferred its property to one Brigham Sellers in 1902 after receiving a delayed land patent in 1873. A half-dozen years later, the ranch was sold to Milton O. Bitner (in 1908). Salt Lakers Blaine and Milton C. Bitner and their families have used the historic buildings for their far-ranging livestock operations till the present day.

History (aside from Indian tribal history) began hereabouts in 1848 when Parley P. Pratt first claimed the land. He then built his "Golden Pass Toll Road" through the canyon that still bears his name in 1849-1850, a road followed by numberless emigrant wagons for 20 or more years. Samuel Snyder bought some of Parley's land claim for a yoke of cattle and built a sawmill soon afterwards. His name is memorialized as tiny Snyderville. But land close to what was to become a stone stagecoach station remained in Kimball hands, and William H. Kimball built a wooden bridge across Kimball's

sell, Majors and Waddell, and then "passed into the hands of its chief creditor, Mr. Ben Holladay," identified by historians as an energetic Missourian. Such reports are gleaned, in the main, from issues of the *Springfield Republican*, a still-existing Massachusetts newspaper.

Holladay so improved the line that he became (according to the same source) "one of the most wealthy men in America, say five millions of dollars, who maintained palatial homes on the Hudson . . . and at Washington, D.C." Visiting his Overland line "about twice a year," he was reputed to have been driven "from Salt Lake to Atchison, twelve hundred and twenty miles, in six and one-half days" and was only "twelve days and two hours from San Francisco to Atchison . . . the trip cost him probably twenty thousand dollars in wear and tear of coaches and injury to and loss of horses by rapid driving." This same Ben Holladay was described by the more scholarly Henry Villard as "a genuine specimen of the successful Western pioneer of former days, illiterate, coarse, pretentious, boastful, false and cunning." Just the stuff of which Hollywood or TV heroes are made.

The St. Joseph, Mo., line running to Sacramento, Calif., required 25 days for the trip. Originally operating semi-monthly, it was upgraded to weekly and then daily under Holladay. Recollecting his own stagecoach days, Capt. J. Lee Humfreville of the U.S. Calvary reported in an autobiography that stages transporting passengers and express "travel all



Well-preserved stone ranch house and log barns near Park City served the Overland

Stage, Ben Holladay's line and Wells Fargo Express. Buildings are 138 years old.

—Drawing by Jack Goodman

Disguise was major theme of explorer's life

Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton: The Secret Agent Who Made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Discovered the Kama Sutra, and Brought The Arabian Nights to the West, by Edward Rice; Scribners, 533 pp., \$35.

Among the fascinations of 19th century England is its lengthy roster of great and peculiar minds in men and women of extraordinary character and courage.

Many became scholar-adventurers, and the epitome of the type was Richard Francis Burton, the indefatigable explorer best known for his expedition into central Africa with John Speke in search of the source of the Nile River. Speke was eventually credited with the discovery of Lake Victoria as the river's headwater, but his feat would not have been possible without Burton's experience in facing the unknown.

Lionized during his lifetime, Burton's hold on the popular imagination has remained strong in the 100 years since his death. In this century he has been the subject of numerous

The Salt Lake Tribune



A genius at languages, Burton spoke 29. An obsessive writer, he published more than 40 books on his travels. He translated another 30 volumes, among them the *Kama Sutra*, a manual of sexual practices he discovered in India, and the story-telling classic *The Arabian Nights*, which he presented with its original eroticism intact. He understood erotica from personal experience, gaining much of his knowledge of both sex and language in brothels. Everywhere he went he made expansive notes on the religious and sexual mores of the natives. As a self-styled "amateur barbarian," he also freely

plunged a spear through Burton's cheek with such force that it came out the opposite side of his face, knocking out two teeth, damaging his palate and leaving deep scars that made his appearance even fiercer than it had been.

As far as danger went, the African expedition was the high-water mark of Burton's life but not the end of his travels. In 1860 he visited the United States, where he traveled by stage-coach to Salt Lake City to gather material for a book on Mormonism. Returning to England, at age 40, he married Isabel Arundell, the daughter of a prominent English Catholic family before joining the Roman

While the present generation of ranch houses, built-
et fences surrounded the ranch buildings, helping the setting and overall
look of the older structures retain the flavor "we moderns," associate
with the old stagecoach stations in Overland City. I thought everyone knew
that — you're obviously not a Utah
Park City. I thought Ranch out near
the old Kimball Ranch out near
Kimball named it first.
How did you get your unusual first
name? He replied: "I was named
asked the late Ranch many years ago,
stop, this columnist many years ago,
met with the historic stagecoach
ranching families," no longer is con-
cerned with the present generation of

candor, Burton's later diplomatic career included assignments in backwaters: From Fernando Po, he was transferred to Brazil, back to the Middle East in Damascus and finally, to Trieste in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where he finished out his days. He died in 1890 at the age of 69. Although he was knighted, it seems clear that his country never gave him the financial rewards or the honors his service should have commanded.

Disguise, notes Rice, was a major theme of Burton's life. It not only protected him in the field but shielded him from those who tried to know too much about the innermost man. Though his public actions were amply documented in his own books and the eager Victorian newspapers, no one can say, for instance, what his religious beliefs were or even if he had any.

His unwillingness to reveal himself also presents an obstacle for a biographer trying to get too intimate.

Bio traces poet's life in sympathetic way

Coleridge: Early Visions, by Richard Holmes; Viking, illustrated, 409 pp., \$22.95.

The news of Coleridge: Early Visions is that its author, Richard Holmes, not only forgives Samuel Taylor Coleridge for being who he was, but that he actually admires him for it.

This is not to be taken for granted. As Holmes writes in his preface to *Coleridge*: "Wordsworth called him 'the most wonderful man' he had ever known; but many subsequent biographers have been sceptical."

It would seem possible to write an entire book on Coleridge's opium addiction, his plagiarisms, his fecklessness in marriage, his political 'apostasy,' his sexual

desire to be a good father to their children.

When you add the complication that being at home with Sara seems somehow to have been connected with Coleridge's ill health and consequent dependence on opium, you get a portrait of a man who is suffering quite nobly.

Everything culminates with Coleridge's decision to join Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy in the Lake District of northern England during the summer of 1800.

Coleridge has up to this point been the stronger of the two men in their esthetically revolutionary collaboration on the first two editions of *Lyrical Ballads*. But

The railroad like-wise ended the passenger traffic — at least as far as long-haul traffic was concerned. The militia Overland Stage Line, founded by one William H. Russell of New York, began operating across the state in 1852 under the urging of the fed-
eral government. It was next carried through abouts at the famous Ute pass near the narrow stage road on the north side of the Intermountain, the route lead-
ing past the recently built local tribe houses. Its reachable only by way of the day is out of bounds for most visi-
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